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ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For additional information contact:**

Lisa LaPlante at (616) 632-7567 or [Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov)

**Longtime Housing Commission and Community Development  
Director Linda Likely to Retire**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Over the past decade, as Kent County has seen many changes in the housing and community development markets, there has been one constant: Linda Likely, Director of the Housing Commission and Community Development. Her dedication to implementing and facilitating community development initiatives throughout Kent County, as well as finding housing for low-to-moderate income families, veterans, the elderly, and those living with disabilities, has been unwavering. This month, Likely announced that she is planning to retire from Kent County, effective January 31, 2016.

Likely previously served as Chief Executive Officer of Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. (KNHS), a nonprofit agency where she managed operations. KNHS helps low-to-moderate income families attain affordable housing. She was hired by Kent County in 2005. "Working for Kent County for the past decade has given me a chance to work with talented and dedicated professionals who are committed to making a difference," Likely said. "Collaboration with our community partners has helped many families find affordable, safe housing. We know that housing can be the starting point for better outcomes for children, adults, and communities."

"Linda is a leader who gets things done and truly has a servant's heart," said Kent County Board of Commissioners Chair Jim Saalfeld. "She has served in a variety of roles dedicated to business, education, and assisting the underprivileged over the past 25 years. She is someone to be admired and leaves big shoes to fill."

Likely's dedication to Kent County's most vulnerable residents has touched many lives. "Linda shares her commitment and enthusiasm with her staff every day," said Kent County Administrator/Controller Daryl Delabbio. "She's also worked closely with Veterans Services, local nonprofit agencies, and local units of government to improve access to housing for many."

A lifelong resident of Grand Rapids, Likely was selected by Harvard University for the Achieving Excellence Series. Other achievements in her career include:

- Addition of the HOME Investment Partnership Program (Approximately \$700,000 in annual funding);
- Developed of the Veterans Assistance Supportive Housing (VASH) program and the addition of 153 VASH vouchers to assist homeless veterans;
- Developed and managed over \$70,000,000 in HUD funding to facilitate infrastructure improvements, create additional housing, supportive, and employment opportunities for Kent County residents;
- Addition of the Section 8 Home Ownership Program;

*(more)*

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- Developed and managed a \$3.9 million dollar Neighborhood Stabilization Grant to address the foreclosure crisis in Kent County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) jurisdiction and managed approximately \$600,000 in funding for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing;
- Collaboratively developed the Community Development 5-Year Consolidated Plan with the Cities of Grand Rapids and Wyoming;
- Was awarded Emergency Solutions Grant Funds;
- Appointed to the Federal Reserve Board to represent Affordable Housing (West Michigan);
- Appointed to the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO);
- Selected as a recipient of the W.W. Plumber Giant's Award and one of the "50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan."

"Linda's expertise in State and Federal regulations has been helpful in the growth of the Housing Commission and Community Development Department over the past ten years," said Wayman Britt, Assistant County Administrator. "She has developed partnerships and worked with various community leaders to provide better opportunities for residents throughout Kent County."

Linda likely holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University. She plans on consulting, teaching, traveling with her husband, and spending more time with her children and grandchildren. The Kent County Administrator's Office and Human Resources Department are working on a transition plan and are conducting a search for her replacement.

***PLEASE NOTE: An Open House to celebrate Linda's career will be held on Wednesday, January 27 from 2:00 - 4:00 PM at the Kent County Administration Building, 300 Monroe Ave NW in the Board of Commissioners Chambers.***

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